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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to teach members of Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) to write a news release. Discussed first are the content and purposes of a news release. The mechanics of writing news releases are outlined. Provided next are guidelines for selecting photographs to include with a news release. Concluding the guide is a brief examination of the importance of radio and television stations in publicizing HOSA activities. A sample news release is appended. (MN)

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GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

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GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

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Preface

The "Guidelines for Writing a News Release" was written to provide instructions on how to write a news release for the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) student organization. These guidelines should also assist other community or professional organizations to publish their information. Many organizations and or individuals would be willing to assume this responsibility, however, have not received any training or experience.

The content includes, what should be included in a news release, mechanics of preparing news releases, information on photographs, and preparing news to the radio and television stations. In addition, a sample news release is provided to allow interested individuals to review how a news release should be written.

Guidelines for Writing a News Release

Writing a News Release

What should be included in a news release?

WHAT - Business meeting, social activity, speaker, competitive events, or other activity

WHO - Names of organizations and people involved, such as committee chairmen, elected officers, speakers, winners, etc.

WHEN - Exact date and time of meeting or activity (Monday, June 16, 1981, at 8:30 a.m.)

WHERE - Place

WHY - Purpose of activity or meeting if not clear in description

HOW - Details of how the activity was carried out

The lead (the first sentence or two) should answer these questions. The lead is designed to give the reader information quickly and in such a manner that he/she will want to read the rest of the story.

After the lead, the details are written in declining order of importance. This permits the story to be cut from the bottom, if need be, without having to rewrite the article or leave out important facts. Be sure to stick to facts! Be brief, accurate, and neat! Use short words, sentences, paragraphs!

Mechanics of Preparing News Releases

News releases should always be typed on one side of paper only and double-spaced, on 8 1/2" X 11" plain white, medium-weight paper (not onionskin).

Allow ample margins (1 1/2") for the editor to make notes. Leave about 2 1/2 inches of the first page blank at the top for the editor's use.

Identify your organization and/or school in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Give the date the release is sent, the name of the person to contact for further information, and the name, address, and telephone number.

Write a release date at the top of the page to indicate when the story can be published. If it can be published anytime, write "For Immediate Release."

If the news release consists of more than one page, end each page at the end of a paragraph. At the end of the release, type "end" or "###."

Type of Photographs

Provide photographs with a news release if possible.

Use a 35 mm camera and black and white film.

Take photo as close to subject as possible.

Try to portray some action in the photo.

Take at least two (2) pictures of each event.

Provide the photographer ample space and time to give instructions on what pictures he/she would like to take.

Attach a description to each photo that is sent to a newspaper. Briefly, it should describe in one or two sentences what the picture shows and the names, titles and affiliation of the subjects.

Identify individuals in photograph from left to right.

Attach the description to the photo to prevent errors in identification. A small piece of tape may be used.

Do not write on the back of the photo as this may detract from engraving quality and may make it unusable.

Write the name, address, and organization identification if the photo is a head shot of an individual.

Enclose the picture between cardboard to mail in order to prevent damage.

Provide different pictures if several newspapers are used.

Radio and Television News

Organization members should not overlook radio and television (TV) stations in providing news about their organization. Radio and TV are as important to the publicity cause as are newspapers, magazines, and other publications.

Radio and TV stations are required by the terms of their Federal licenses to make available a part of the time they are on the air for "public service" programs and announcements. Activities conducted by student organization members have a broad appeal and merit a share of this time.

Information regarding an organization's conferences, competitive events, fund raising activities, educational programs, and service projects are newsworthy and important to the school and community. The information may be publicized effectively through interview shows, panel or group discussions as well as spot announcements.

The news media should be extended an invitation to attend any activities in which you participate. It is very important to know the station program director when possible or to have a contact with the station who can give some assistance in developing usable materials.

A good publicity coverage is never complete unless local radio and TV stations are utilized. Remember there are many individuals who get much of their news from one or the other. Many will hear the message an organization wants to deliver where they would never take the time to read about it. Radio and TV stations may also cover a wider area of the community than the local paper.

Sample News Release

A sample news release is included to provide information on how a typical news release may be written (Appendix A). Individuals responsible for preparing information for release may use the sample as a guideline.

Sample News Release

From: _____

Telephone: () _____

Date: _____, 19 _____

For Immediate Release

Local Students to Attend National Leadership Conference

Seven members of the _____ High School Chapter of the Alabama Association, Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) will leave on _____, 19____, for _____ to attend the Tenth Annual HOSA National Leadership Conference. Students from _____ High School will participate in the following events: _____, Extemporaneous Speaking; _____, Informative Speaking; _____, Medical Terminology Spelling; _____, Job Application; and _____, Poster. _____ will attend as a voting delegate. The HOSA members will be accompanied by _____, HOSA Chapter Advisor.

The Health Occupations Students of America is a State and National Organization for students interested in and preparing for careers in Health Occupations Education. The National HOSA Organization Headquarters is located in _____, _____. There are about eighty chapters throughout the state with approximately 2,200 members which include students, advisors, professional members, and professional organizations.

There are many activities conducted at the National HOSA Conference. A series of Leadership Development events are scheduled each year which consist of business meetings, Board of Directors meetings, campaigning and election of officers, competitive events and informative workshops. A formal Awards Program held on the evening of _____ will feature the presentation of national awards and installation of newly elected national officers.